

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

BRANDON CHARLES HATCH,

Defendant.

CASE NO. CR19-0095-JCC

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Brandon Hatch's unopposed motion to proceed with his sentencing hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 41). Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained herein.

I. BACKGROUND

Defendant Brandon Hatch was arrested for sexual abuse of a minor on May 29, 2019 and has been in custody ever since. (*See* Dkt. Nos. 5, 12, 31.) Mr. Hatch pled guilty on January 14, 2020 but he has not been sentenced because the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Court's ability to conduct in-person hearings and Mr. Hatch declined to consent to a remote hearing. (*See* Dkt. Nos. 20–24, 41 at 2.) In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Mr. Hatch's attorney's ability and willingness to meet with Mr. Hatch in person at FDC Seatac to review the presentence report and discuss strategy for the sentencing hearing. (Dkt. No. 37 at 2.) Mr. Hatch

1 now moves to proceed with a remote sentencing hearing. (Dkt. No. 41.)

2 **II. DISCUSSION**

3 Delaying Mr. Hatch's sentencing would cause serious harm to the interests of
4 justice. *See* W.D. Wash. General Orders 04-20, 09-20, 14-20, 17-20, 06-21. Under General Order
5 04-21, in-person proceedings will not resume until May 2021, at the earliest. *See* W.D. Wash.
6 General Order 04-21. Even then, in accordance with public health guidance, the Court will be
7 strictly limiting the number of people that can attend these proceedings in person. *Id.* In addition,
8 Mr. Hatch seeks a 24-month sentence, which he argues would make him eligible for release now.
9 (Dkt. No. 41 at 2.) Delaying Mr. Hatch's sentencing by at least several more weeks would cause
10 serious harm to the interests of justice because Mr. Hatch has a strong interest in the speedy
11 resolution of this matter after pleading guilty more than fourteen months ago.

12 **III. CONCLUSION**

13 For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant Brandon Hatch's motion to
14 proceed with his sentencing hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 41).

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16 DATED this 23rd day of March 2021.

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20 John C. Coughenour
21 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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